

Dallas and Ruby

"You just either are for this town or you're on the outside looking in," a Dallas business leader has observed. Dallas is a city of passionate "boosterism"—its citizens are quick to talk up "Big D's" virtues and just as quick to bristle at criticism. It is also a strongly conservative and conformist city.

After the shootings in Dallas last November of John F. Kennedy and his alleged assassin, Lee H. Oswald, many citizens asked publicly whether the city had been caught up in a "climate of hate." Mayor Earle Cabell declared: "Each of us must search his heart, asking whether by any intemperate word or deed he helped push [Oswald's] mind across the brink of insanity." But as Dallas came under stinging worldwide criticism, public discussion focused on means of rebuilding the city's "image."

Last week the climate of opinion in Dallas was a pivotal question in court proceedings involving Jack Ruby, killer of Lee Oswald. Ruby's attorneys asked that his

trial be moved from Dallas, charging that the city's leaders

wanted to make Ruby the scapegoat and wash away "the sins of Dallas." They brought in a parade of witnesses to testify that Ruby could not get a fair trial in Dallas.

On Friday, Judge Joe B. Brown put off a final decision on moving the trial pending an attempt to select an unprejudiced jury. He ordered that the trial begin tomorrow as planned, with the questioning of prospective jurors. Whether they could pick an unprejudiced jury, he said, would be "the true test" of the atmosphere in Dallas.

In Washington last week the special Presidential commission investigating the assassination heard its second witness—Mrs. Marguerite Oswald, 56, Lee Oswald's mother. For three days she argued her son's innocence, disagreeing with his widow's conclusion that he was guilty. "She's telling her story in her own way, from beginning to end," said Chief Justice Warren. He said "she has not given us any facts that would change the picture as we know it." Mrs. Oswald told reporters her son was a C.I.A. agent "set up to take the blame" for the assassination. C.I.A. chief John McCone declared: "Lee Oswald was never directly or indirectly linked with the C.I.A."

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